



NEWS FILE/MICHELLE WILLIAMS

Birmingham officials say Legion Field will be the new home of the old video scoreboard from Bryant Denny Stadium. The board is being replaced with newer models during \$80 million in renovations to the Tuscaloosa stadium's south endzone, shown here behind coach Nick Saban during the 2007 A-Day scrimmage.

Stadium will get more Tide history

By JOSEPH D. BRYANT
News staff writer

A piece of Crimson Tide history is getting a new home at Legion Field. After years of tallying points of powerhouse SEC football matchups for hundreds of thousands of fans, the old video scoreboard at Bryant-Denny Stadium is

heading to Birmingham. The board is being replaced with newer models during \$80 million in renovations to the Tuscaloosa stadium, and the city of Birmingham was awarded the bid for the retired equipment.

The City Council today will vote on paying \$30,000 for the scoreboard. The board

is set to be transported to Birmingham later this month.

The Tide scoreboard will replace Legion Field's 20-year-old scoreboard — which does not have a video screen — at the north end of the stadium, said Kenneth M. Blackledge, Legion Field's stadium

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Tuesdays April 16, 2010

Families will be able to stay with injured vets

By JEFF HANSEN
News staff writer

Since 2008, about 800 military service members have gone through Lakeshore Foundation's Lima Foxtrot program, learning to be active and independent through recreation or sport — despite blindness, amputation, paralysis or other severe injury.

But one thing has been missing: the close participation of their families. Service members stayed in a dorm on Lakeshore's Homewood campus, with room for only one friend or relative.

On Monday, ground was broken to fill that gap — construction of two cottages and four duplexes where families can stay for longer, more intensive and individualized visits.



NEWS STAFF/BEVERLY TAYLOR

W.D. Foster of Alabaster, left, and Dr. Leah Hagedorn of Norfolk, Va., observe the groundbreaking ceremony Monday at Lakeshore Foundation in Homewood.

"One thing we have learned," said Lakeshore President Jeff Underwood, "is that inclusion and involvement of families are key to the success of the program."

The hilltop residential area will include a flagpole, an outdoor

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CAMPAIGN 2010

Most hopefuls in GOP districts reject bankruptcy

County's fate in hands of winners

By BARNETT WRIGHT
News staff writer

Bankruptcy is not a viable option to most candidates seeking to replace two Jefferson County commissioners who have favored bankruptcy to solve the county's sewer debt crisis.

If those candidates win,

it could almost guarantee a negotiated settlement between the county and creditors over the \$3.2 billion sewer debt.

A record 34 people are running for the commission in the June 1 primary election, including for seats now held by current GOP Commissioners Bobby Humphries and Jim Carns, both of whom have said they favor a Chapter 9

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INSIDE

Taliban attacks U.S. Consulate in Pakistan / 3A

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By ERIN STOCK
News staff writer

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COMMISSION: Bankruptcy not popular

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Bill Humphreys is seeking a second term in District 3. Carns is not seeking re-election in Districts 1 and 2.

Most Democrats — including those in the heavily Democratic Districts 1 and 2 — oppose bankruptcy. The decision on bankruptcy could be determined by GOP candidates in the heavily Republican districts of 3, 4 and 5.

"We do not need to have bankruptcy," said Jimmie Stephens, a Hueytown educator and Bessemer businessman, running in District 3.

"Bankruptcy is not an option. It would hurt the current generation and for many generations to come. It would inhibit our ability to borrow money now and in the future. Our school systems would hurt. Corporate would hurt," Stephens said.

Lisa Pack, an administrative assistant in the county's roads department also running in District 3, said bankruptcy would drag down every municipality in the state.

"It's a domino effect," she said. "Everybody's already been affected by everything that has happened with our financial rating and our credit rating, and I don't want to make it any worse than what it is."

Jay Miller, a sheriff's department employee, said bankruptcy is an option, but a last resort.

"My position is that this can be solved," Miller said. "We need to negotiate with creditors to a fixed interest rate that we can all live with and reduce the interest rate on the bonds."

Humphreys said recently a solution to the sewer debt crisis can be reached if creditors agree to reduce the debt by \$2 billion. If that doesn't happen, and finance experts don't believe it will, Humphreys said the county should file bankruptcy.

Not all candidates in District 3 want to negotiate with creditors.

David Alan Phillips, a business owner, said bankruptcy would give the county an opportunity to regroup and restructure. "It's not that we wouldn't have to pay it back, it's that we can restructure it and actually find out what kind of debts are in there and if there were illegal shenanigans," he said.

Talks between county officials and JPMorgan Chase & Co., the county's largest creditor, have been on and off since 2008, when the financial crisis started. In an

attempt to avert what would be the largest government bankruptcy in U.S. history, the county has been looking at ways to restructure the debt.

In Carns' District 5, most of the candidates also say they are not for bankruptcy.

"I think a settlement can be negotiated," said Stephen Duncan, a businessman. "I don't see how Chapter 9 remedies anything as far as the debt service goes. I think a negotiated settlement is the way to get out of this."

Jim Atkinson, former deputy chief in the Jefferson County sheriff's department, said he favors talks. "I would be more satisfied with a new commission and a county manager sitting down and trying to reduce that debt to where it can be paid," he said. "After all, it would be the largest bankruptcy in municipal history. It's going to be a black eye either way."

David Carrington, a Vestavia Hills City Council member, said bankruptcy has to remain on the table, but "fresh faces" might be needed to negotiate a settlement.

"The current commission can't reach consensus," he said.

In District 4, where Commission President Bettye Fine Collins is not running for re-election and has opposed bankruptcy, most candidates said they were leaning toward talks.

Wayne Taylor, Trussville City Council president, said he would set a deadline for creditors to reach an agreement.

"I would give them an ultimatum," he said. "I would much rather have a voluntary restructuring."

Ed Hanson, former Jefferson County deputy tax assessor, said sewer revenues will not support repayment of the debt.

"We would have to negotiate it down to a figure that the county could pay," Hanson said.

Joe Knight, a lawyer, said the county still would have to come up with a plan to pay the debt in bankruptcy. "It's not like it goes away, so why not negotiate or resolve it outside of bankruptcy instead of inside of bankruptcy," he said.

Ronnie Dixon, former chairman of the county's Planning and Zoning Commission, said he favors getting banks to lower the debt to a price the county can afford.

"I don't think the banks exercised their responsibilities in allowing the former commission to borrow more than we could pay back," he said.

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SCOREBOARD: More Tide history at site

From Page 1A

manager. There is already a video scoreboard at the south end.

"We are excited about it," Blackledge said. "This means that hopefully we'll turn the corner where we can compete with other venues, and stay within the competing and ever-changing video market. This is a shot in the arm for us."

Legion Field already has a place in Crimson Tide history.

It's where Alabama teams recorded many of their big wins. And it is where Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant celebrated his record-breaking 315th win. In 1948 it became the home turf for the annual Iron Bowl battles between Alabama and Auburn. In 1989, Auburn moved its home

turf for the annual Iron Bowl games to its campus stadium and Alabama followed in 2000. The last Alabama game at Legion Field was in 2003.

But the crimson and white colors adorning the scoreboard won't remain once it's installed.

"It will be painted gray to match the Old Gray Lady," Blackledge said, referring to Legion Field.

Blackledge said \$30,000 is a low price for the relatively new equipment. City officials said the money comes from bond money dedicated to park improvements. The city will have to allocate additional money to pay for delivering and installing the scoreboard.

'Amazing days'

Taylor Watson, curator at the Bryant Museum in Tuscaloosa, said the addition to Legion Field adds another tie between the Crimson Tide and its former longtime home playing field.

"Those must have been some amazing days in Birmingham. That's where you won championships," said Watson. "For the longest time that was the biggest stadium in the state. For a while I'm pretty sure Legion Field was the largest in the South."

Watson said stadiums like Bryant-Denny continue to change as new technology and amenities are added to enhance the game.

"I guess that's the way of all stadiums now," Watson said. "They've got to have jumbotrons and music blasting. Now you've got to have high definition television, blaring rock and roll, just give me the football games."

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